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A MOST
Learned and Eloquent
S P E E C H,
Spoken and Delivered in the H O U S E of
Commons at Westminster.

By a most LEARNED LAWYER, the 23. of June, 1647.

Mr. Speaker,

I Know no man weaker then my self; who do acknowledge I am as unfitting to speak in this Honourable House, as *Phormio* the Philosopher was, to prattle an Oration of War-Discipline to the great Souldier *Hanibal*, in the presence of King *M.* Yet out of the debility of my knowledge, the Inability of my Learning, the imbecility of my Judgment, the Nobility of this Transcript Senate, the mutability of their Censures, the instability of Opinions, the timorosity of Offending, the volubility of Scandal, and the impotency of my Utterance, I have, (maugre all these perilous Impediments,) adventured to unbosom and disburden my mind before these unmatchable *Patriots*.

Mr. Speaker, I am not ignorant that you are appointed in the the Parliament, to be Ear to the King, and mouth of the Commons; And I desire that your hearing may not take Offence at my words, nor your Tongue retort me a reproof instead of an applause. *Mr. Speaker,* In my Introduction to *Grammar*, vulgarly called *Accidence*, I found Eight Parts of Speech, which is now an Introduction to me to divide my Speech into Eight Parts.

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| 1. <i>What we have done for Religion.</i> | 5. <i>What for the Kingdom.</i> |
| 2. <i>What for the Church.</i> | 6. <i>What for the Subject.</i> |
| 3. <i>What for the King.</i> | 7. <i>What for Reformation.</i> |
| 4. <i>What for the Laws.</i> | 8. <i>What we have done for our selves.</i> |

Of all these in order, as my infirm loquacity can demonstrate. *Mr. Speaker,* I do not herein declare, either of neither, the Opinions of this Honourable Assembly, or my own; but I will make plain unto you, how the Malignants esteem us, and into what *Odium* we are fallen among Foreign Nations.

First, for Religion, the Malignants say; We have thrust out one and taken in two; that we have thrown down *Protestantism*, and erected *Anabaptism* and *Brownism*; and that in our Doctrine we abuse the Renowned Memories of Queen *Elizabeth*, King *James*, and consequently King *Charles*; that in their Religions they were Papistically minded, which their Lives and Acts, did, and do manifest the contrary. And the Malignants say, It is no less then odious Treason, either of these deceased or surviving Princes, to traduce with such false and scandalous aspersions.

Mr. Speaker, I would not be mistaken; I say not my own words, but I say what the Malignants say of us, and my Lord *Say*; And they the Protestant and Protestant Church, was wont to be; and ought to be an inward Robe and vesture for the Soul and Conscience of all true Believers; And that the Bishops, Ancient Fathers, and all Orthodox Divines, have, and had a care to keep her neat and handson, in as spotless integrity, as a Militant Church in this imperfect age could keep it.

But our Adversaries, they say, That we have in our Religion an outward Garment, or Cloak of any colour, which none do wear amongst us but Sectaries, Fools, Knaves, and Rebels; the said Cloak, being (with often turning) worn as thread-bare as our Publick Faith is, full of wrinkles, spots, and stains, neither brushed, spunged, nor made clean, with as many patches as Beggars Coats, and that our Preaching or Prating, as they also say, it is kept by Cobblers, Tinkers, Weavers, Wyer-drawers, and Hostlers; so that all Order and decent comeliness is thrust out of the Church; all laudable Ornaments (and indifferent becoming Ceremonies) are cryed down, trod down and banished, under the false and scandalous terms of Popery; and in the place thereof is most nasty, filthy, loathsome and slovenly beastliness or Doctrine, being vented in long and tedious Sermons, to move and stir up the People to Rebellion and Trayterous Con-

tributions, to exhort them to Murther, Rapine, Robbery, Disloyalty, and all manner of mischief that may be, to the confusion of their Souls and Bodies: All these damnable Villanies, our Adversaries say, are the accursed Fruits which our new-moulded Linsey-Woolsey Religion hath produced. For they say, our Doctrine is neither derived from the Old or New Testament, that all the Fathers and Testant Doctors and Martyrs, never heard of it, that Christ and his Apostles never knew it. And for the Book of *Common-Prayer* they say in Verse of that.

*Ten thousand such as we can ne'r devise,
A Book so good, as that which we dislike,
The Common Prayer, they mean, if we should sit,
Ten thousand years, with all our Brains and Wits,
We should prove Centenals all, and in the end,
Ne'r make so good, 'tis too good for us to mend.*

And so much they say, we have done for Religion, it being the First Part of my Eighth Part of Speech, as my weakness and your patience will permit, I will more briefly and compendiously proceed to the second.

Secondly, for the Churches, we are taxed by the Malignants with prophane and more than barbarous polutions of the Churches, or Houses dedicated to God's Service: they say, we never built any, but have taken too much accursed pains to deface and pull down many, or perverting the right use of them, into Stables, Brothels, Receptacles for Strumpets, Luxurious Villanies, and infernal stinking smoke of *Mundungus*, as a common Stable, destroying those things which were with great maturity of Judgment, Learning, and Wisdom, enacted by former Parliaments, most execrably spoiling all by the usurping power of this Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, It is a rigorous medicine for the Tooth-ach, to knock out the brains of the Patient, he is no wise man that takes violent Physick, and kills himself to purge a little flegm, nor is he a prudent Builder, that if his House do want some slight repair, wil pull it all down; a man that loves his Wife will not cast her away for a few need-les black patches that her face is disfigured withal. In like manner, the Malignants conceive, if any things were amiss, either in Ornament, Gesture, Ceremony, Liturgy, or whatsoever might have been proved unfitting, scandalous, or justly offensive, as is conceived, it might have been moved or reconciled in a more Christian way, than by Ruinating, Demolishing, Tearing, and Violating, Defiling and Spoiling, all without regard of either Humanity, Christianity, Charity, Law, or Order from God or Man, as too many Parishes and other places in this Famous Kingdom, can most truly, and woefully testify. And these sweet pieces of service our Adversaries say, we have done for the Churches.

Thirdly, Concerning our Loyalty and Obedience to the King; It is manifest, we have all taken the Oath of *Allegiance* to His Majesty, and that we have also lately taken Oaths and Covenants to make War against him, our Enemies would fain know, who had power of dispence, to free us from these Oaths, and likewise by what Authority the latter Covenant and Oaths were imposed upon the Consciences of men? For my own part, if there were no wiser men than my self, this ambiguous *Enigma* should never have gone so far, but it is reported by them, that if we had kept our first Oaths religiously, and not taken the second most perjuriously, and performed them so impiously, then we had never so rebelliously offended so Gracious a Majesty.

Mr. Speaker, Our Adversaries do further alledge, that our Obedience to His Majesty is apparently manifest many strange ways: we have disburdened Him of His large Revenues, we have eased Him of the charge of Royal House keeping, we have cleared Him from repairing of it, or repairing to His Stately Palaces, Magnificent Mansions, and Defensive Castles and Garrisons, and we have put Him out of care of repairing His Armories, Arms, Ammunition and Artillery: we have been at the charge of the keeping of His Children, and most trusty Servants from or for Him; We have taken Order and given Ordinances, that He shall not be troubled either with much Money or Meats, and that His Queen and lawful Wife shall not so much as darken His doors, and We have stroven by open Rebellion to release Him of troublesome life and Reigne, by hunting Him like a Partridge over the Mountains, and by shooting Bullets at His Person for His Majesty's Preservation, on purpose to make Him glorious in another World; we have also eased Him of a great number of His Friends, Subjects, and Servants, by either charitable famishing, Brotherly banishing, liberal and free Imprisoning, Parliamentary Plundering, friendly Throat cutting, and ungodly beheading, and hanging, or utterly ruining as many as we could lay hold of, by destroying of them that either love, served, or honoured Him.

All these heavy Burdens we have eased Him of, and over-loaded our selves with the usurped ponderosity of them; so our Adversaries say, that the weight of them will shortly either break our backs, or sink us for ever.

And they further say, that since the World's Creation, never so good a King was so hardly used, or so Trayterously abused and dealt withal.

Fourthly, *Mr. Speaker*, it is questioned what we have done for the Law, there are some Malignants, that are not afraid to say, that we have transformed and metamorphosed the Common Law of the Land, into the Lands common Calamity; that instead of the Common Benefit, which the Laws in community should yield to all, we have now perverted the same, to the private profit of our selves and some particular Persons; The Civil War is turned to an unciivil War, Blasphemies, Atheism, Sacrilege, Obscenity, Prophaneness, Incest, Adultery, Fornication, Leignany, Polygamy, Bastard-bearing, Cuckold-making, and all sorts of beastly bawdry, is so far from being punished, that it is greatly connived at, or totally tolerated; and that those, who should be punishers of these gross and crying Crimes, as Judges, Officials, Doctors, Proctors, and Apparitors, these are scorned, reviled, libelled against, cryed down, and made to be the shooting-stake and laughing-stock of every libidinous incontinent Whore and Whore-monger.

The Law of God, contained in the Decalogue or Ten Commandments, they say, we have cast out of the Church, not so much as suffering it to be read; and the New Testament, which was the last that Christ commanded, *That we should love one another*; we have turn'd the clean contrary way, to the spoiling and murdering of one another; And for the Law of Nature, it is most unnaturally changed, to a Brutish, Heathenish Inhumanity, Parricide, Infanticide, Fratricide, and Homicide, and hath been, and is by us defended, maintained, and rewarded; no Affinity, Consanguinity, Alliance, Friendship, or Fellowship, hath or can have any true Protestant or Loyal Subject, either of Life, Goods, Safety or Freedom: These are the best Reports our Adversaries the Malignants do give us, to have done for the Laws.

Nay, they say further, we have infringed and violated the Law of Arms here, and the Law of Nations abroad; for whereas Messengers and Ambassadors, have always had, and ought to have free and safe passage, with fair and courteous accomodations and entertainment; but we, contrary to them, and repugnant to Christianity and Christians, have suffered Ambassadors to be Risted, Robbed, and ill-intreated, and we have caused His Majesties Messengers to be hanged, whom he most graciously hath sent to us with conditions of Peace, by *Pax Populi*, or common Vote of the People, without we are pleased to call Malignants Popish Enemies to the State, with other scandalous names, reproachful words and Epithotes, which they utterly deny, and we know both in their words and practice, we are justly taxed to be the mean independent and pestilent propagation of all mischiefs: that this afflicted miserable Kingdom groans and bleeds under; for they say that the old Statute of *Magna Carta* are overthrown by us, under the colour of supporting them by our Votes and Ordinances, Precepts and Proclamations, Edicts, Mandates and Commands; we have countermanded, abrogated, annihilated, abolished, violated, and made void of all the Laws of God and Nature, of Arms and Arts too; and instead of them we have unlawfully erected Martial Law, Club Law, *Shuffes* Law, and such Laws as make moost for Treason, Rebellion, Murder, Sacrilege, Envy and Pander; But as for the King, we have not allowed Him so much Law as a Huntsman allows a Hare; These are our Enemies words, and thus much say they we have done for the Laws.

Fifthly, The first Question or *Quere* is, what we have done for the King. It is spoken, we have done and undone the Kingdom, this Ancient Famous Kingdom, the Envy of the World for happiness, this Eden of the Universe, this Terrestrial Paradise, this abstract of Heaven's blessing, and Earth's content, the Epitome of nature's glory, this exact extraction of Piety, Learning, and magnanimous Chivalry, this nursery of Religion, Arms, Arts, Laudable Endeavours, this brood of men, this wonder of Nations, formerly renowned, feared, and honoured, as far as ever our Sun and Moon did shine; this *England*, which hath been a Kingdom, a Monarchy many hundred years under the Reigns of 168 Kings and Queens, this Kingdom that hath conquered Kingdoms, that hath made, *Italy*, *Palestina*, *Cyprus*, tributary tremblers; hath made *France* quake, relieved and defended *Scotland* from French Slavery, that saved and protected the *Netherlands* from Spanish Tyranny; now we have made this Kingdom of England a most miserable Slave to it self; an universal Golgotha, a purple gore *Akeldama*, a Bloudy Field, a *Gehenna*, a Den of Devils, or Infernal Furnies, and finally an Earthly Hell; were it not for these differences, that here the best men are punished, and in Hell the worst only are plagued; here no good man escapes

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torments, nor any bad man is troubled; the Gracious King is abused, for being good and just, and his true and Loyal Subjects and Servants Massacred, and maligned for their fidelity; the Protestants are called Papists, because they will not be *Brownists*, *Anabaptists* and Rebels, and Adversaries are so bold to say, that we have plotted and laboured long to turn this glorious Monarchy into a pelting holy polly Independent Anarchy, and to make the Kingdom to be no Kingdom; so much they say we have done for the Kingdom.

Sixthly, *Mr. Speaker*, we are questioned what good we have done for the Benefit and Liberty of the Subjects: Some of them say nothing at all, which they find by Lamentable experience, that we have turned their Liberty into Bondage, their Freedom into Slavery, and their Happiness into Unhappiness and Misery; Nay, it is reported we have found no way to Hell for them, which we are perswaded to be the way to Heaven, which is to Rebel or Perjure, to fight in Person against the King, and to be forsworn, to owe Him no Duty and Allegiance; Tush, these are but trifles, and may be answered at any easie rate, a small matter will clear the hearing; it's no more than everlasting damnation, from which Speech, (*Master Speaker*, I am bold to make use of a Speech in the distastful Letany.) *Good Lord deliver us.*

Master Speaker, The Malignants do compare the *Common-Wealth* to an *Old Kettle*, with here and there a fault, a hole, a crack, or a flaw in it; and that we in imitation of our blessed Brethren of *Banbury*, were intrusted to mend the said *Kettle*, but like deceitful cheating, *Tinkers*, we have instead of stopping one hole, made three or four score: For the People chose us for to ease them of some idle and tolerable Grievances, which we have done so cunningly and superficially, that all the Subjects cry out and complain, that the Medicine is forty times worse than the Disease, and the Remedy an hundred times worse than the Medicine; And so much is reported we have done for the Subject, which is either enough, or too much.

Seventhly, *Master Speaker*, The seventh Malignant Question or *Quere* is, what we have done for Reformation? what by our industrious care and long sitting we have Reformed? how the *Sermon and Word of God* is by us Religiously, Sincerely Zealously, Frequently and Orderly Preached and Practised? what we have amended either in the Church or Kingdom? how either the King is by us honoured, or the Subject eased? or what we have done these four or five years? the Malignants would fain know with what faces we can look on the Free-holders and Corporations in every Shire, County, City, Town, and Burrough in this Kingdom, who cried us up with their voyces, and carried us up like *Popes*, on their shoulders with an *Elle*, to be Elected Knights and Burgeses: which way, *Mr. Speaker*, can we answer them, for our many Breaches of that great Trust which they intrusted us withal? (I tell you, *Mr. Speaker*, these are home Questions,) and that they say plainly, that our Reformation is Non-confirmation, and by sure Confirmation, true Defamation, and that we have by cunning Transformation turned all to Deformation, so that our Predecessors and Ancestors that are deceased this Life, to a better or worse, should or could they arise out of their Graves, and see the change, alteration and unmanly madness, that hath overspread this *Church and Kingdom*, they would think they were in *Turkey*, *Barbaria*, *Cerika*, *Tartaria*, or some Land that is inhabited by Infidels, Pagans, or Devils; For *England* as it is, looks no more like *England*, as it was sixty years ago, than a Camel or a Cockle are like an Owl or a Red-herring.

Eighthly and lastly, *Mr. Speaker*, The Malignants question us, what we have done for our selves? Is it true, Charity begins at home, and we ought to make much of and strengthen our selves; but we have run as the Adversaries say, to the hazarding of our Estates, to be justly forfeited for Rebellion against so just, merciful, and truly Religious a King; our Lives are liable to the censure of such Laws as former Parliaments have Enacted against Rebels and Trayterous Rebellion, and our Souls are in danger of Perdition, if Submission, Contrition, and Satisfaction be not Humbly, Heartily, and Speedily performed; for we, and only we, have altered this Kingdoms Felicity to Confusion and Misery; from a blest merry Comedy, to a doleful Bloody Tragedy, which may fill a large History of perpetual memory to the everlasting Oblivion, Shame, and Indignity of Us and our Posterity: And thus, *Mr. Speaker*, with as much Brevity as I could, I have run over my Eight Parts of Speech, whereby may be perceived how our Malignant Adversaries do esteem of Us, and our Actions: I could speak more than I have said, and I could say more then I have spoken, but having done, I hold it manners and discretion to make an end.

F I N I S

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